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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Electronic Media Services

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2641

December 17, 1993

GATT -- The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that President Clinton has told Congress he will sign reduces tariff barriers around the world and reduces foreign subsidies of agricultural products, two actions that offer opportunities for increased U.S. trade. The agreement also establishes a new institution, the World Trade Organization, to regulate and resolve trade disputes. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy says the agreement ends discrimination against U.S. products, preserves the nation's ability to retaliate against GATT violators, and assures more jobs in the U.S. by boosting exports. The agreement, with accompanying changes in U.S. trade law, will go to Congress for approval under the "fast track" process that does not allow amendment. Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.

EXPORTS BOOST THE ECONOMY -- High-value product exports during fiscal year 1993 total \$22 billion, up 4 percent over the October 1992 - August 1993 period of a year ago. U.S. bulk exports declined 3 percent in value to \$17 billion despite volume gains. U.S. agricultural exports generate income, employment and purchasing power in both the farm and nonfarm sectors. Each dollar received from agricultural exports in 1992 stimulated another \$1.44 in supporting activities to produce exports in 1993. U.S. agricultural exports generate an estimated 902,000 full-time jobs, including 562,000 jobs in the nonfarm sector. Contact: Joel Greene (202) 219-0822.

HUNGER FORUM -- The first of USDA's four regional forums focusing on obstacles and solutions in the fight against hunger was held in Burlington, Vermont, December 13. Presiding at the meeting were Assistant Secretary Ellen Haas, and Senator Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. The forum looked at the linkages between hunger, health, poverty, children's ability to learn, economic stability, and community development. Future forums are scheduled in McAllen, TX, Kansas City, MO, and Dayton, OH. Contact: Johna Pierce (202) 720-1691.

1994 CASH RECEIPTS -- If next year's crop yields return to trend levels, crop cash receipts could rise 2 to 7 percent. With the exception of cotton and tobacco, all crops are indicating higher receipts in 1994. Total gross cash receipts could hit \$180 billion, up 5 percent from this year. Contact: Robert McElroy (202) 219-0800.

1993 NET FARM INCOME -- Net farm income, which measures the year's production and adjusts for changes in inventories, should fall this year particularly for hard-hit States in the midwest. The floods, and drought in the southeast, are expected to have a significant impact on the value of 1993 corn and soybean inventories which could be reduced by \$3 billion. Higher prices influenced by weather reduced production will benefit producers with crops to sell. Net farm income this year is forecast at \$44 billion, down 10 percent from 1992. Contact: Bob McElroy (202) 219-0800.

JOB DEVELOPMENT -- USDA has signed a cooperative agreement with seven land-grant universities to develop jobs and income producing projects for underdeveloped rural communities. The \$3 million dollar agreement will establish pilot projects which providing technical assistance to communities and small businesses located in traditional agricultural dependent communities. Bob Nash, USDA under secretary for Small Community and Rural Development, says the program will aid potential applicants in rural communities to compete for designation as Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities. The program will be coordinated through USDA's Rural Development Administration and the Extension Service. Contact: Marlyn Aycock (202) 720-4323.

EMERGENCY WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM -- USDA's Soil Conservation Service will purchase easements from midwest landowners who voluntarily agree to return cropland to wetlands. The program is available to landowners in the eight flooded midwest states when the cost of cropland reclamation or levee repair exceeds fair market value of the cropland. Landowners must submit applications to their local SCS field office. The sign-up period ends December 30, 1993. The program is being offered in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Minnesota, Kansas, Wisconsin, and South Dakota. Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.

ANOTHER USE FOR AG BYPRODUCTS -- Tests by researchers with USDA's Agricultural Research Service show that soybean hulls, rice hulls, rice bran and sugarbeet pulp will bind metals and other industrial wastes so that they can be removed from water. Industry and wastewater treatment plants currently use commercially available resins, but the resins do not break down easily, creating a disposal problem of their own. The inexpensive natural byproducts from agricultural production do not pose this environmental problem because they break down rapidly. Contact: Joseph Laszlo (309) 685-4011.

RESULTS OF ADVERTISING MILK -- Studies show that advertising raised fluid milk sales an estimated 1.2 billion pounds, or 5 percent, during 1992. An assessment of 15 cents per hundredweight of milk sold commercially provides funds for such advertising, as well as for research and nutrition education regarding fluid milk and milk products. The assessment is mandated by the Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983. USDA studies show that since passage of the act, fluid milk sales are estimated to be up 4.3 percent, about 8 billion pounds, above what they would have been without the advertising. The gain per act-increased advertising dollar is about 37 gallons. James Blaylock (202) 219-0862.

FEEDING THE HOMELESS -- USDA hosted hundreds of homeless people at a special holiday meal served December 16 at its Washington headquarters. USDA employees paid for the meals and toys for children. Secretary Mike Espy, who welcomed over 700 homeless people to the meal, said it was a way for USDA employees to share during the holidays. Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.

COLON CANCER -- Medical research has linked increased levels of the bacterium *Streptococcus bovis* with colon cancer in humans. Tests indicate a gene cloned from a bacterium normally found in the stomach of cows acts as a probe to seek out and bind to various strains of the suspect bacteria in the human colon. The discovery was made by scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service who were studying the role of the bacterium gene in breaking down starches to simpler sugars. Detecting the cancer could become easier using the gene. Contact: Terence Whitehead (309) 681-6272.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1906 -- After seven years of trade talks the 117 nations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade finally reached agreement in Geneva. Brenda Curtis analyzes the arrangement, and takes a look at the original goals and final reality. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1388 -- A holiday gift plant; TV and the eating habits of children; cool energy savings; spice is nice; 1994 food price outlook. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1898 -- The GATT deal; 1993 floods to affect '94 farming; farm bill debate preview; growing ginseng in the U.S.; Japan's rice market opening. (Weekly reel of features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1651 -- Counting carotenoids; bad oxygen; looking at lutein; shopping for carotenoids; isotopes and nutrition. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tuesday, December 28, weekly weather and crop update; Wednesday, December 29, hog and pig numbers; Thursday, December 30, ag world prices, world tobacco situation. Friday, December 31, HOLIDAY. These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on holiday food safety, and small scale agriculture.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on the latest weather and crop conditions; world board chairman James Donald on crop supply and demand.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on coaxing genes; Pat O'Leary reports on USDA efforts to share plants and seeds with the former Soviet republics for maintenance of biodiversity.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

LOTS OF CHANGES...have occurred in the technology used to compile information for farm broadcasting, says **Jack McConnell** (KMMJ, Grand Island, NE). Jack has returned to the business after a four year break. He says computers keep throwing him a curve, but his 6-year old granddaughter has offered to help him out. Jack says hay is commanding premium prices in his region. Supplies will be gone by January 1. He predicts an immediate impact on herd size.

WINTER MEETINGS...come fast and furious during this month, says **Art Sechrest** (WJBC, Bloomington, IL). A two-day conference on ethanol is on his schedule. Art says the corn growers in his area are concerned about EPA decisions on the fuel. They plan a campaign in Washington, D.C. to get their message distributed calling for ethanol plans to go forward.

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES...improved this year, says **Jim Yancey** (Progressive Farmer Network, Starkville, MS). Field equipment and pickups were updated. Cotton production in Jim's area was lower this year but producers are receiving higher prices, possibly reaching \$.78/lb.

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MOVED...Joe Gangwish from KMMJ, Grand Island, NE, to WOW, Omaha.

CONGRATULATIONS...to Gene Williams (WNAX, Yankton, SD). Gene was featured in the December issue of Mid-Am Reporter, published by the Mid-America Dairymen.

PROGRAMMING FOR THE HOLIDAYS...can require long-range planning. **Max Armstrong** (WGN/Tribune Network, Chicago) says Orion Samuelson, Dave Russell, John Block, and Max produced a 30-minute Christmas on the Farm program about reflections of their youth in agriculture. Max says producing a 30-minute Year-End Look at Agriculture is an interesting exercise. He notes that some issues which seemed urgent fade with time, new matters develop to take their space, and some continue to occupy a place on the stove and cook a long time. GATT being just one example. Congratulations to MAX. The Illinois Commodity Conference presented him their Broadcast Award for his continued extensive reporting of agriculture.

VIC POWELL
Office of Communications

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!